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NEW YORK POST
10 FEBRUARY 1983

Sen D'Amato's bombshell charge:

CIA BOSS SABOTAGES POPE PROBE

By NILES LATHEM
Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON —
New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato accused CIA Director William Casey yesterday of covering up the Soviet-Bulgarian connection of the plot to kill the Pope.

In a telephone interview with The Post upon his return from Rome, D'Amato revealed that Italian authorities told him they were "shocked" by the way the CIA was trying to "obstruct and deflect" the investigation of the Bulgarian connection to the assassination attempt.

"I was told that the CIA is using disinformation and all sorts of other tactics to divert, dissuade

and actually block this investigation," he said.

Asked if he was suggesting that Casey himself is involved in a coverup, D'Amato said "Yes."

D'Amato also said U.S. Embassy officials in Rome did everything

they could to prevent him from investigating the matter himself.

He said U.S. Ambassador Max Raab sent him a telegram before he left saying "Don't Come."

D'Amato also said a staffer on the Senate Intel-

ligence Committee was prevented from going with him on the trip because of CIA pressure.

"And while I was there I had to scratch, stumble and fight for everything."

He said he would complain personally to

President Reagan and National Security Adviser William Clark about his findings.

"It's very suspicious. It smells of a coverup."

D'Amato's statement comes one day after it was revealed that President Reagan himself called Casey on the carpet for the CIA's mishandling of the case.

But other sources said the CIA made the decision to stymie the probe in Casey's absence.

The CIA's General Counsel Stanley Sporkin reportedly told European field agents to drop the matter after he checked with officials at the State Dept.

Many officials at the State Dept. are anticipating a summit meeting between Reagan and Soviet strongman Yuri Andropov — the ex-KGB

chief suspected of being the mastermind of the plot — and do not want to antagonize him with a strong pursuit of the assassination attempt.

But D'Amato said he was told by Italian officials there is strong evidence of direct links between the Soviet-controlled Bulgarian Secret Service and the plot to kill the Pope, despite CIA claims that Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca was insane or lied to cooperate with Italian police.

He revealed there is other evidence that the Bulgarians are using Italian agents in a plot to discredit Lech Walesa, leader of the banned Solidarity Union in Poland, and that the Bulgarians are masterminding a

huge gun-running and heroin-smuggling operation involving the Sicilian Mafia and Turkish businessmen



SEN. D'AMATO
Fight for info.



9 February 1983

By PAUL MINOUSY

NEW YORK, FEB 9: REUTER -- NEW YORK SENATOR ALFONSE D'AMATO TODAY ACCUSED THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) OF DELIBERATELY OBSTRUCTING THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II.

D'AMATO TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL FROM ROME THAT THE CIA CONDUCT WAS "VERY SUSPICIOUS" AND THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS "THE CIA WOULD HAVE LIKED THE INVESTIGATION DROPPED."

ASKED IF HE WAS SUGGESTING THAT CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY MAY BE INVOLVED IN A COVER-UP, HE SAID "YES."

D'AMATO ACCUSED THE CIA OF ATTEMPTING TO "CAST DOUBT ON THE COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY OF ITALIAN AUTHORITIES."

THE NEW YORK REPUBLICAN ALSO SAID THAT STRONG FACTS LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIET KGB WERE INVOLVED IN THE MAY 1981 PAPAL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.

HE SAID HE WAS "SHOCKED TO LEARN FROM A HIGH CIA OFFICIAL IN ROME THAT NOT ONE AGENT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE CASE."

HE ACCUSED CIA OFFICIALS OF SPREADING "DISINFORMATION" TO LEND CREDENCE TO THEORIES THAT WOULD-BE ASSASSIN MEHMET ALI AGCA WAS A KADKAN.

HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE CIA "CARRIED OUT A WAR OF SILENCE, OBSTRUCTION AND DISINFORMATION" IN THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION.

D'AMATO, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN WHO HAS GENERALLY BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, BLASTED IT FOR NOT HAVING THE CIA ACTIVELY COOPERATE WITH ITALIAN AUTHORITIES AND FOR TREATING THE INVESTIGATION INTO WHY THE POPE WAS SHOT AS "AN INTERNAL MATTER" FOR THE ITALIANS TO HANDLE.

"THAT'S NONSENSE. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IMPLICATIONS THAT GO FAR BEYOND AN INTERNAL AFFAIR, TO THE BULGARIANS AND THE SOVIETS," HE SAID.

HE ADDED, "THAT IS THE MOST SHODDY, ILLOGICAL EXPLANATION I HAVE HEARD."

EARLIER TODAY, WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY MORT ALLIN TOLD REPORTERS, "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FEELS VERY STRONGLY THAT THIS IS AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION BEING CARRIED ON WITH CONSIDERABLE CARE AND WE HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE IN WHAT IT IS DOING."

CONTINUED

AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON SAID THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION NO ASSISTANCE WAS REQUESTED FROM THE CIA.

"WHY SHOULD WE HAVE ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER?" SAID PAOLO TRABALZA, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ITALIAN EMBASSY.

D'AMATO CITED THREE EXAMPLES OF CIA OBSTRUCTION OF THE INVESTIGATION.

HE SAID UNNAMED CIA SOURCES SPREAD STORIES LENDING CREDENCE TO THE THEORY THAT AGCA WAS INSANE AND THAT THE CIA SUGGESTED THAT ITALIAN AUTHORITIES HAD TAINTED AGCA'S TESTIMONY BY IMPROPERLY GIVING HIM INFORMATION.

HE ALSO ACCUSED THE CIA OF STOPPING A KEY SENATE AIDE FROM GOING WITH HIM TO ROME BY SPREADING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIDE'S INTERESTS IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. HE REFUSED TO NAME THE AIDE.

"THERE IS NO POSITIVE INFORMATION COMING FORTH FROM THE CIA; ONLY DISFORMATION INTENDED TO CAST DOUBT," HE SAID.

D'AMATO SPENT FIVE DAYS IN ROME, TALKING TO ITALIAN AND AMERICAN AUTHORITIES.†